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WEST LAFAYETTE'S WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT RECOGNIZED FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE

Food waste converted into energy helps power City's utility

West Lafayette, IN – September 26, 2012 – Recognized for its cutting edge waste-to-energy wastewater treatment system that generates electricity from grease and food scraps, the City of West Lafayette recently received the Indiana Governorôs Award for Environmental Excellence.

In presenting the award to West Lafayette officials, Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) Chief of Staff Kent Abernathy lauded the City for its innovation.

ñThe City of West Lafayette and the Wastewater Treatment Utility can be proud of their success in going above and beyond Indianaôs basic environmental requirements in renovating the plantôs digesters,ò said Abernathy. ñIDEM is pleased to recognize the City for its extraordinary efforts to reduce energy consumption and reduce unnecessary waste.ò

According to Wastewater Treatment Utility Director Dave Henderson, the idea for the digester gas project came out of the Cityôs need to renovate its facilityôs aging digesters and equipment.

ñThrough our Digester Renovation with Alternate Power Sources project, the necessary replacements and additional system upgrades were done to convert food scraps, fats, oils and greases into methane gas that powers electric turbines for electricity at our Plant. We receive fats, oils and greases from area restaurants and food scraps collected from Purdue University.

ñWe are working to increase the amount of food waste received and always are looking for new wastes to feed our digesters. Everyone loves seeing grease and food waste turned into electricity instead of being sent to landfills,ò Henderson said.

According to West Lafayette Mayor John Dennis, a major success factor in the three-year-old gas digester project has been the ongoing partnership with Purdue University.

ñOur digester system offers a unique way to think about recycling. West Lafayette residents and our partners at Purdue University embraced this approach of turning food wastes into renewable energy. From the wastes collected to the deliveries we receive from Purdueôs Solid Waste Recycling, it has been ï and continues to be ï a team effort,ò Dennis said.

In 2011, about 18 percent of the electricity used by the Wastewater Treatment Utility each month came from its in-house alternative energy source. The amount was equal to the electricity used by 75 homes. The reduction saved the Utility approximately $4,900 per month. The Utility also reduced its annual natural gas consumption by about 51 percent, achieving a savings of approximately $30,000.

On line since 2009, the digester gas projectôs capacity continues to increase each year, with an aeration tank recently added. Two additional micro-turbines may be added in the future. Communities in surrounding states have shown an interest in duplicating the project.

West Lafayetteôs Wastewater Treatment Utility is a member of the IDEM-U.S. EPA Indiana Energy Management System Pilot Program for public wastewater and drinking water utilities to reduce energy usage

and utility costs. West Lafayette also is a member of the Indiana Comprehensive Local Environmental Action Network (CLEAN) Community Challenge through which municipalities voluntarily implement environmental management systems in their daily operations.

West Lafayette officials received the Governorôs Award in the Energy and Renewable Resources category during the 15th Annual Indiana Pollution and Prevention Conference last week.

About West Lafayette

Under Mayor Dennisô leadership, economic growth is promoted, quality of life is enhanced and a positive business environment is created for West Lafayetteôs more than 29,800 residents from 54 nationalities. For more information on the City, check out: www.westlafayette.in.gov

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NOTE: an accompanying photo and caption are provided in separate attachments.

For questions or interview requests, contact Utility Director Dave Henderson at (765) 775-5145.